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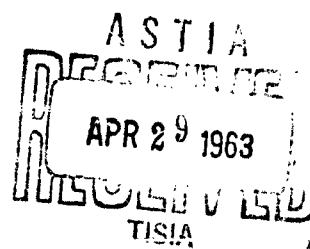
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NUCLEAR CONTROL AFTER NASSAU

Malcolm W. Hoag

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PREFACE

This paper is a sequel to P-2594-1, "Missiles For France?", which appeared in the January, 1963, issue of Foreign Affairs under the unfortunate title of "Nuclear Policy and French Intransigence." It considers American nuclear policy toward a possible NATO nuclear force in the light of recent developments. Some points made in the earlier paper are repeated in order that this draft may be self-contained.

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NUCLEAR CONTROL AFTER NASSAU

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I. POST-NASSAU PROBLEMS

The Anglo-American Nassau Agreements in December, 1962, and General de Gaulle's shattering press conference of January 14, 1963, compel a reappraisal of American nuclear policies in NATO. The immediate results of Nassau can be quickly summarized: The British bought both an option upon Polaris missiles and American slogans for NATO, General de Gaulle bought neither, and the United States is left with worries that its policies were compromised.

The pertinent policy slogans are a "multilateral" nuclear force, "indivisible" nuclear defense of the Western alliance, and more effective conventional forces. A compromise of the first two of these is implied by the famed escape clause in the Nassau Statement: ".....except where Her Majesty's Government may decide that supreme national interests are at stake, these British forces will be used for the purposes of international defense of the Western alliance in all circumstances." How seriously does this clause qualify "multilateral" and "indivisible"? Opinions differ, but the NATO deterrent force, for Great Britain at least, will be multinational rather than multilateral. Its main contribution can revert to Great Britain as an operable force in crises, which is what matters. For, as President Kennedy so clearly recognized in his off-then-on-the-record press conference of December 31, 1962: ".....the British will have their deterrent. It will be independent in moments of great national peril,

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which is really the only time you consider using nuclear weapons anyway."* A provision that covers all relevant contingencies is an escape clause indeed.

There is no need to impugn British dependability or standards of responsibility. An attack upon any NATO country so overwhelming that it might require strategic nuclear retaliation would convince every NATO country that its supreme national interests were at stake. Still, agreements that establish vital precedents matter. How is another NATO member now to view participation in a multilateral force that yields it no comparable privileges for national reversion? Alternatively, to give many NATO members fully comparable status would be to create a multinational force that could splinter that "indivisible" nuclear defense into many national forces. To do so would be to foster rather than deter a proliferation of nuclear powers, and so contradict another basic goal of American nuclear policy.

More effective conventional strength is also impeded as doubts are cast upon nuclear "indivisibility." A multilateral force need not be very costly to loom large in NATO European defense budgets that, in the aggregate, are about one third the American defense budget. If, however, a multilateral force can be depended upon to operate integrally with American strategic forces, but not without them, partial budgetary offsets are made possible. Another missile abroad may permit one fewer at home. Yet even then the other half of the implied bargain -- more GI's in Europe than would be needed if more of the increased European effort were directed toward conventional strength instead of European missiles -- would supply the world's most vivid example of uneconomic trade pursued for overriding political reasons. The worst case, of course, would combine this division of conventional labor with a multilateral force so liable to fragmentation that no specific part of it could be counted upon for global strategic operations. If the multilateral force cannot be counted upon in global strategic planning, no fewer American

* The New York Times (Western Edition), January 11, 1963

missiles will be made possible and there will be no budgetary offsets. Where we shall fall between the worst and best cases remains to be seen.

A more immediate possibility for competition with strengthened conventional forces also deserves mention. Before any NATO multi-lateral missile force is established to implement Paragraph 8 of the Nassau Statement, existing forces, including "tactical nuclear forces now held in Europe," will presumably have been allocated to a multinational force under the terms of Paragraph 6. How this is done may be militarily harmless, but symbolically beneficial, or it may not. For example, some tactical strike fighters may now be reserved at all times for predetermined priority nuclear missions, for the eminently sensible reasons that there are not enough securely based missiles that could hit targets quicker, while the bulk of strategic bombers could only hit them hours later because they are an ocean away. This situation is changing rapidly as Minuteman and Polaris missiles phase into operation. It may become sensible to let these or other missiles take over the priority nuclear assignments, and so free the tactical aircraft to exploit their flexibility in a variety of lesser nuclear or non-nuclear contingencies as these may develop. Thus NATO's limited war air capabilities may grow, while the fixed general war assignments are better covered by more securely based missiles whose ability to penetrate enemy air defenses is greater. To block this possibility by freezing tactical aircraft to priority nuclear missions via multinational force "strategic" assignment could be militarily costly. More generally, to implement Paragraph 6 by widespread commitment of existing forces would be to impose additional political constraints upon military planning. As weapons change, so should the way in which some particular tasks are to be done, but Paragraph 6 constraints could inhibit efficient adaptation.

Such are the gloomy possibilities after Nassau. They demand attention because the drive toward a NATO deterrent force has so quickened that its shape may soon be determined. If the opportunities are great, so are the risks, and the greatest is the standard one: What begins as only a means may become such an end in itself that it

impairs progress toward original goals. This, above all, is to be avoided. More specifically, allocations of existing units should be confined to those that are almost certain to remain efficient components of strategic general war forces; the cost of new European contributions to a multilateral force should be held to moderate levels; and the nuclear defense of the alliance should not be made all too readily divisible because multilateral degenerates further into multinational. Continental contributions should not lead to revertible national forces, nor should the possibility be foreclosed that future British contributions will take a less national form.

II. MULTILATERAL PURPOSE AND INTERDEPENDENCE

What then should be done, now that American prestige is committed to the concept of a multilateral NATO deterrent? Above all we need to articulate purpose more clearly, face the control problem, and suggest a force design and use more concretely. Given these, our allies can shape their own views more readily. Diplomacy will be facilitated, although perhaps not the creation of a force. But surely the aim is not speedy creation of a force that can fit the label, so that what the force is to do for whom is a question that can be put off for later consideration. To proceed this way would be to start building a house before calling in the architect. Or, more pertinently for NATO discussion, it would be to emulate France in its zeal for a force first, complex strategic considerations second, and so to embarrass the inquiries that allied and domestic critics alike should put to France.

The long discussions about multilateral force purpose can be conveniently condensed under three headings: Participation, Voice, and Control. The first involves European physical sharing in strategic weapon systems; the second, political sharing in strategic decisions; and the third, perhaps, specialized Command and Control arrangements. Participation is costly but easy, and would be designed to blur the invidious line between "American nuclear Knights and European foot-sloggers" in the alliance. European status and prestige would be served. There might also be technological by-products for European economies, although other avenues are open for peaceful uses of atomic energy, and civilian by-products from missile guidance systems, solid fuel propellants, and nose cones are not likely to be great. Still, a world where the less developed countries prematurely seek steel mills, research reactors, and national airlines, and the United States races to be first on the moon, is a world grown accustomed to expensive pursuit of prestige, and it would be surprising if NATO countries were an exception. A reasonable burden of Participation can be borne.

Control, in contrast, raises both hard issues and frightful risks, while a Voice in nuclear strategy raises only the former. This distinction needs to be sharpened, for some speak of a multilateral force as the principal means for Europeans to participate in strategic discussion. Surely that should not be. Why exclude a non-participant from the deliberations that influence NATO nuclear plans, force posture, and declaratory policy? More pertinent still, why exclude such an ally from crisis consultations about whether to use nuclear weapons, when, and how? Its survival is at stake too, and it deserves to be informed and to be heard no less than those who participate directly in a multilateral force. To give all members a greater voice in these fundamental questions, as has been done, is to move toward Atlantic partnership. To give some a lesser voice would be a divisive step back from the achievements noted at Athens last May: "The Council noted the progress which has been made in the direction of closer co-operation between member countries in the development of the Alliance's defense policy. So that all member states may play their full part in consultation on nuclear defense policy, it has been decided to set up special procedures which will enable all members of the alliance to exchange information concerning the role of nuclear weapons in NATO defense."*

Participants in a multilateral force would naturally determine its size, composition, and day-to-day management and support. But its strategic control could be left to them only if its use threatened to bring retaliation against them alone, which is unlikely. The logic of "No annihilation without representation" applies as much to such a force as it does to existing American and British strategic power, and for the same reason. It would not apply to a particular Western strategic force if that force were known to be based in one particular area by itself, and if the Soviets were certain to have reliable quick means for determining when firings against them came only from that area. Then the Soviets would know when only the one Western force

* NATO Letter, June, 1962, p. 13.

had fired at them, and might confine retaliation to the one country. Allied disengagement from the firings would be possible. But these stringent conditions are exceedingly unrealistic.

Consider the North Atlantic a few years from now with American, British, and possibly French submarines plus, say, several NATO-manned ships with Polaris or comparable missiles. If the Soviets are ever hit hard by missiles from the Atlantic, with what NATO country can they afford to assume they are not at nuclear war? One thing can certainly be said. The atmosphere would not be conducive to calm, trustful, and reflective Kremlin consideration of any messages about Western bombers in the air and other readiness measures being undertaken solely for defensive purposes, especially when a deceptive disavowal is as much in the interest of the powers that fired or intend to fire as a sincere disavowal is for others. Under the enormous shock of thermonuclear attack, with crucial decisions to be made while enemy vulnerabilities decline by the minute and one's forces are in jeopardy, the urge to use remaining retaliatory power widely will be tremendous. The least that a NATO nation could reasonably fear would be an attack upon any vulnerable nuclear strike elements that might be in its territory, such as aircraft; the most, the kind of attack upon its very existence that Soviet propaganda and published doctrine stress.

The "indivisible" nuclear defense of the Alliance rests upon a strong idealistic foundation. It is based also, however, upon realities even less subject to question: the awesome power of anybody's deliverable megaton linked to time measured in minutes for mass intercontinental exchanges. One frequently hears the comment that if one NATO nation proposes to join the nuclear club in order to be able to start a war she cannot finish, the others should feel equally free not to join it, which is fair but irrelevant. There may be no way to decline in the event, so allied interests must be safeguarded in advance. Thus any political guidelines for the employment of a multilateral force should be as much subject to full alliance debate and influence as those for the employment of American strategic power. Equally, no nonparticipant should be excluded from

crisis consultations when nuclear war looms, whenever circumstances permit consultation. A Voice in these fundamentals must be preserved for each, but not necessarily, of course, a Veto.

These are considerations to bear in mind when some speak of assisting European nations, nationally or collectively, toward independent nuclear status. Independent possibly in starting a war, but not in prosecuting it, is the likely result. And if interdependence in consequences is expected, should its fuller recognition not be the avowed purpose of NATO nuclear policy, including the multilateral force? A European component of an Atlantic nuclear force, not an insulated European force, can be created, and its operations should be viewed accordingly.

Such a multilateral force component would make the permanence of the American strategic guarantee less subject to question. A force that would be more than a coordinated group of national strike elements is constitutionally novel in NATO, and probably requires a supplemental treaty. A missile-carrying ship that is financed and operated jointly, and controlled at all times by NATO or a sub-group within NATO, flies what flag and belongs to whom? The Jupiter squadrons in Italy and Turkey have been under the peacetime command of SACEUR, but they have been nationally owned. Many important NATO installations have been jointly financed under the infrastructure program, but they revert to host countries once common use ceases. A multilateral force would be more NATO-committed than everything that has preceded it. NATO is a marriage whose bonds are strong, and a multilateral component will make divorce still more difficult. Deeper nuclear commitments that clearly apply to the 1970's are now especially pertinent evidences of intent, because Article 13 of the North Atlantic Treaty stipulates that any Party may denounce membership after notice in 1969.

III. FORCE CONTROL

Control Requirements

What, then, of Control? Suppose that a multilateral sea-based force is created, and that its missiles are ordinarily assigned to some of whatever military targets remain vulnerable. Then the first operational requirement for global coordination could be met as other strategic forces (American) were able to shift partially to other targets. A second requirement for compatibility with all possible strike options would be met because these particular targets would be chosen to fit within any of them. A flexible global strategy could incorporate this inflexible component. The multilateral force then could and presumably would fire with the first wave of any American general war strike, rather than as a part of any forces withheld to threaten the enemy with subsequent attack. As part of the first wave, the multilateral force would have to be well protected, but not as elaborately as forces designed for possible withholding throughout a period of nuclear attack. Thus, for example, missiles might be held back in more secure if more expensive submarines, while missiles were fired from surface ships.

Before turning to the crucial trigger issue, one implication for operational coordination with a force de frappe should be noted. General de Gaulle's January 14th references to the "possibility of the action of that force being combined with that of similar forces of its allies," and to "strategic cooperation" were auspicious, despite the overall context that rejected integration. Yet if France orients her force toward city attacks, as all the justifications of its strategic significance despite small size indicate, it would not fit within all global strike options. Accordingly, it could not be a rigid part of a first wave without threatening the very purpose of a possible restrained strike. But will it be designed to meet the very taxing criteria for survivability throughout nuclear attack that must be met by a withholdable and flexible strategic system, as distinct from a system that needs to be secure only until unambiguous

warning of attack is received, after which missiles can be fired in a predetermined plan? If so, will French striking power be withheld in situations where cities have not yet been subject to nuclear attack, but other targets have been? Answers are needed before the meaning of cooperation can be established, and -- given the extent to which blueprints today bind strategic possibilities many years from now -- answers now are none too early.

A Control Proposal

If the multilateral force is targeted to be part of any first general wave, it can be made more quickly responsive to attack. Then the "trigger" issue can be made less intractable, because the technical features will have been designed to ease the political problems. There are two related problems. First, how assure that an order to release warheads that are in American custody is given, and possibly curtail the unique American veto that warhead control involves? Second, how determine that a firing order is given to the force, and possibly limit the veto power of European countries as well? Although they might be combined in practice, two command channels are in question. A partial prescription for the first can also serve to raise pertinent issues about the second.

Suppose the missiles are put in a European line of command that goes at the top, say, to the Secretary-General of NATO, while the warheads are in the custody of an American line of command that goes to the President. Such a custodial arrangement would fit existing law and practice. But for illustrative purposes and with no official sanction whatsoever, let us add an element: the Presidential signal, without which no missile warhead can be armed, will be automatically transmitted if more than a preestablished number of nuclear bomb alarm indicators at key places in Europe are triggered by Soviet nuclear attack.

Objections leap to mind. Would such a scheme risk nuclear war by electronic accident? Would it make nuclear response too easy, or, conversely, to Europeans would it offer no additional assurance of response? For these or other reasons, why do it? But it could be

done, and therefore such a scheme serves at least to sharpen the policy questions. Technically any of many arrangements is feasible, and a choice among them would make political issues explicit. Thus would a Soviet nuclear attack on 90 per cent of the key strategic places in one European country, unaccompanied by attacks elsewhere, be enough to trigger the signal, as well as, say, a more general attack that hit 30 per cent or more of such places throughout Europe?

Legally, such a scheme probably is within the constitutional powers of the American President as Commander-in-Chief, for warhead release would be pre-authorized only against massive nuclear attacks that would be certain to include strategic American elements and demand fast response. Custodial detachments at European strike bases and elsewhere would be hit as a minimum. More generally, the point of the system would be to confirm that the probability is zero, for all practical purposes, that a rational Soviet Union would ever strike massively at Europe but not America at the same time. In extreme circumstances, electronics would thus substitute partly for federation in making NATO an inseparable target entity in terms of the retaliation that Soviet attack would generate. Nuclear attack upon West Europe alone, or the American Pacific Northwest alone, would be equally absurd for the Soviets, and equally dangerous to them.

A command to fire missiles, as distinct possibly from release of one signal required for their arming, need not and should not be automated. For safety against accidental or unauthorized firings, independently required human checks would be inserted in the missile and possibly the warhead release sequences. For assured weapon responsiveness, on the other hand, extra sources and communications can be provided at each check level to make the system less vulnerable. A system could be created comparable in principle to a two-combination safe, with a warhead release sequence to operate one combination, and a command sequence to operate the other. The "numbers" for each combination could be held at separate levels. The first number for the first release combination could be the President's, releasable by him, by highest surviving American political authorities, or possibly, as sketched above, by the impact of extreme Soviet attack. The first

number for the first launch combination might be similarly releasable by NATO's Secretary-General or his highest surviving political associates, while a second number must be released by top military commanders. The NATO military commanders would not possess the first number, but would be assured that it existed in enough secure places, each with access to many protected communication links, that Soviet action could not in all probability block its transmittal. After attack such a number might even be broadcast in uncoded form over all surviving radio stations. If all this appears complex, mechanistic, and horrible, so it is; controlled retaliatory nuclear systems are like that, and uncontrolled ones are worse.

Operational Implications

If safety against irresponsible firing can be provided, what assurance of responsible firing does such a scheme offer Europe that it does not already have? In American, and many European eyes, nothing. But to the Soviets and to Europeans governments that doubt the American guarantee, or more precisely to their parliamentary opponents, it would strengthen the NATO remedy for the Suez Syndrome. This feared sequence involves a European country in forceful action somewhere, followed by Soviet threats to launch missiles at the European country unless it desists. Sometimes it is claimed that the involved country would have no alternative between compliance and holocaust unless it had a nuclear deterrent of its own, which is certainly too simple a view. A third alternative is always open: continue, and test whether the threat is a bluff, as the scores of Soviet missile threats have so far been. If one's nerve to test the bluff is bolstered by a secure national deterrent, rather than undermined by fears that a possibly insecure national deterrent might act as a lightning rod to draw Soviet fire, how much more would it be bolstered by tangible assurances that the strategic power of the entire West was geared to retaliate against Soviet execution of any such threat? Better yet, would not the assurances make the Soviets less inclined to utter such threats?

This partial remedy is important because the Suez Syndrome is prominent, and because European national remedies for it, upon close examination, promise less. But to go farther is difficult. The difficult-to-dissolve feature of a multilateral force and its joint operation, the need for dependability in its part of possible global strategic strikes, and, above all, the interdependence of consequences throughout NATO should all or part of it be fired, combine to form one restrictive premise for Control procedures: However the decision is made to fire all missiles in accord with Plan A, or some missiles in Plan N, the force should operate as an integral unit. No sizeable part should be withdrawable as a national force either to fire or to try to disassociate from firing.

To premise in contrast a right and ability to disengage in a crisis changes the entire course of argument, and naturally leads to different prescriptions for Control.* To write a new Treaty for a multilateral force that explicitly contains procedures for crisis withdrawal is not to reaffirm the "attack on one or more ... shall be considered an attack against them all" Article in the original treaty, but to subvert it. If such procedures were suggested by the United States, in particular, decision making for future contingencies might be anticipated by precipitating an immediate crisis of confidence. Those who already misread American policies as implying withdrawal from Europe would seize upon any such suggestions as confirming their suspicions. Therefore the United States should not propose withdrawal rights even if isolation from strategic nuclear actions were feasible, and all the more should not when isolation is infeasible. The "indivisibility" theme is doubly right.

As a lesser but related operational consideration, the ability to rely upon a multilateral force to strike as a coordinated unit and the confidence that it will strike with American strategic forces

* See Klaus Knorr, A NATO Nuclear Force: The Problem of Management, Princeton Center of International Studies, Policy Memorandum No. 26 (February 5, 1963) for a structure for decision making that is ingenious and clear, but which is incompatible with those suggested in this paper because derived from this contrasting premise.

are prerequisites for real military utility. Otherwise the unfortunate military planner can only estimate highly uncertain but sizeable discounts for political unreliability for different contingents of the multilateral force, with these added to similar discounts for missiles out-of-commission, losses before use, unreliability in use, attrition, and so on. He would end up with expected contributions so low and variable that they must be treated only as unpredictable "bonuses" in target coverage, with high-confidence coverage required fully from other sources. A multilateral force will be expensive enough, and pride in its real military utility important enough, to merit control procedures that breed confidence.

Given these reasons for integral operations within Western strategic forces as a whole, no control procedures can be tolerated that disrupt global coordination as to what is hit, when, and by whom. That reduces the remaining big issues to influence upon decisions to strike, and what kind of a strike it shall be -- the famed "Go-No Go?" and "Which Option?" questions. These questions are linked, and control procedures about the first must take full account of the second. Thus automatic release of warheads to the force possibly becomes acceptable not merely because enemy attack would be extreme, but because the targets for reflex retaliation would fit all options. If the targets do not fit all, reflex operation would not be acceptable. Imagine a sweeping Soviet nuclear strike against military targets in West Europe, but one that sought to paralyze retaliation by sparing cities and keeping them under threat. A resultant paralysis of NATO would be intolerable, but so would a reflex retaliation against Soviet cities that would generate mutual holocaust. An appropriate retaliation to any such bizarre Soviet attack might likewise be city-sparing, but drawing from the strategic resources of the entire West and covering military targets in the Soviet Union as well as the satellites. The prospect of such retaliatory damage should be a formidable enough deterrent for anybody, even though, by the incredible standards of the nuclear age, it would be "restrained"; while its non-suicidal character would enhance its credibility as a deterrent.

Criteria for Release

Providing even the limited degree of automatic release in our illustration, given acceptable targeting and operating coordination, does two things: it qualifies the American veto, and raises complexities about weighted voting in the control of a multilateral force. Different weights for different European countries would be implicit in defining what strategic targets in Europe are "key" ones, and in valuing one of them relative to others. In a sense each such target must be assigned a basic number of points, possibly plus extra points for a country if almost all key targets there are hit, and the total points required to release the warheads, as registered by a bomb alarm system, must be established. Worse yet, what constitutes a "hit" must be defined -- what combination of blast overpressures, thermal effects, radioactive contamination, and so on? Should an utterly devastating hit register more points than one that just measured over the mark? How many more? The complexity is evident, and because the definition would be needed in peacetime, there would be plenty of time to debate about alternative combinations. Problems that had been conveniently buried would have to be faced.

Before dismissing any such scheme for its dispute-producing complexity alone, the standard caution applies. The difficulty about criteria arises inescapably from the problem, not from a particular proposal for its solution. How would NATO go to what kind of war, especially nuclear war? Sweeping this and other troublesome questions under the rug is a time-honored procedure, and one sometimes of great political value. Yet fuller nuclear partnership in the Alliance implies, at the least, intellectual engagement. Are proud allies to busy themselves about nuclear weapon effects first, strategic issues second; to learn to walk before they run? Ideally, yes; practically, no. One must even quarrel a bit with Mr. Acheson's magnificent speech: "But it does seem to me a waste of time to chase its [multilateral force's] distant implications of control and command to daily logical extremes before there is anything to control or command. Our allies can hardly have very solid ideas about how they want to participate

in nuclear defense until they know something about it."* They already know something, and nothing is more clarifying about what is known and agreed, and what is not, than debating explicit proposals that do not permit the essentials to remain vague. To answer "What's the System?" before answering "What's the Job?" is the way to get a bad system.

The difficulties about explicit release criteria, or "points" in the illustrative scheme, would in any case be greatly eased in practice by two considerations. First, for deterrent purposes the Soviets need be informed only in very general terms, and would not be able to calculate attacks that fell just below the critical threshold. Second, any rational Soviet attack would tend anyway to avoid the half-way tactics that risk the worst of all results: so limited in scope that they hardly affect the strategic balance, but so provocative as to invite retaliation that is unlimited in geographic scope. Much of NATO Europe for years to come will contain nuclear strike components that are simultaneously very dangerous to the Soviets and vulnerable. For the Soviets to attack such components in one country but not others may be tempting but incredibly dangerous, as would be Europe-only attacks. Over a broad range within which the threshold for release might be set, the deterrent to geographically-limited Soviet nuclear attack would be strong.

Establishing the criteria for retaliatory release in any such schemes would undoubtedly involve heavy weights, for example, for Great Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany. Each contains a big population and many NATO nuclear installations. Lesser weights would naturally apply to others, but they should be significant for all. Specifically, there should be weights also for non-participants in the multilateral force. No new force should in any way appear to remove the American strategic guarantee from a cooperative ally especially in the eyes of the Soviets. Nor should any ally be excluded from strategic discussions that affect the fate of all

* New York Times (Western edition), March 14, 1963, p. 2.

unless full consultation is impossible, which effectively means when the enemy permits too little time. The political guidelines for the employment of nuclear weapons, and the more precise criteria that possibly may specify release procedures or rules of engagement, should be discussed by all in peacetime. At the other extreme, the sudden overwhelming attack that precludes consultations will have to be met. In the one case all discuss; in the other, no one. In between lie the ambiguous contingencies for which special voting procedures are often proposed, with these to apply in crises where only partial consultation is possible and action cannot be hamstrung by multiple vetoes.

IV. VOTING CONTROL

One of many possible voting arrangements can serve to illustrate the problems: a group of five nations to control a multilateral force, with a majority decision required to fire and with the United States, Great Britain, and the Federal Republic of Germany as three of the five members. Then no combination of two irresolute members could block firing, which limits veto power and offers assurance against paralysis under Soviet threat. To fire, only half the European votes need concur with a positive American decision. Or any three of four European votes would be enough, even though the United States might be opposed to firing. The American power to veto would be explicitly limited in specified procedures, rather than, as previously illustrated, in specified extreme contingencies. Therefore changes in American law would be required. Would these be found desirable or feasible in the United States? There is a prior related question: Who in Europe would want the American legislation changed, and who would not? Opinion there is not monolithic, nor would it be insensitive to which countries had votes. Any student of Europe could supply two countries as candidates for the other votes who would generate apprehensions elsewhere because of past and prospective parliamentary instability and bellicose military doctrine. If one of them combined these attributes with an especially exposed geographic position, the committee of five might well be unacceptable to most Europeans as trigger-prone.

Any committee acceptable to most Europeans is likely to be a responsible one. Negotiatory and constitutional difficulties aside, the United States could safely expect that at least two out of four European votes would be against firing whenever it was. Natural European disinclination to consider non-nuclear hostilities must never be taken as a greater willingness on their part to face nuclear war. The disinclination is not a relative matter, but rather one that emphasizes deterrence of any war, at the expense of defense in war, even more than does American philosophy. But crucial voting

about missile firing would only arise in a crisis where some kind of serious war was already being fought. Deterrence in the no-war-at-all sense would already have failed. The value of "deterrence-only" policy would have depreciated sharply, leaving its cost measured in low credibility that risky threats would be executed. Given the acid test, it is European rather than American thinking that would probably counsel partial capitulation if need be, and this tendency would be reinforced by sharpened awareness of still greater European vulnerability.

A three-of-five determination that was broadly favored in Europe should thus be acceptable to the United States, if compatibility with relevant strike options is assured. But such an arrangement is much more difficult politically than the partial automation of a signal in the release sequence after Soviet nuclear attack. An American Administration cannot confidently propose where Congress obviously disposes; America should not in any case presume to prescribe for Europeans what Europeans want politically; and how Europeans are to prescribe collectively for themselves is by no means clear. Beyond lie lesser technical difficulties as well. How could the Presidential release signal legally be safeguarded within a non-American NATO Command until and unless there were a three-of-five determination? Alternatively, warhead arming might be authenticated by receipt of any three-of-five different national signals, which is possible but obviously more complex and expensive.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Even so cursory a glance at the problems implicit in voting control of a multilateral force serves to re-emphasize old points. First the American willingness, as expressed by President Kennedy in Ottawa in May 1961 and subsequently, to entertain European ideas about political control sympathetically, but not to press any particular voting formula, was and is appropriate. Clearer initiatives, usually so admirable, would in this case generate resentment at home and abroad. Something that approaches a European consensus requires European initiative, and in turn Congressional approval. Second, all that can be done should be done to provide a Voice for all NATO countries in nuclear policy. NATO as a whole should be so informed about nuclear philosophies, capabilities, and plans that no member state can justly complain that it is excluded from the strategic councils that matter most. And, third, the range of contingencies that require NATO to use nuclear weapons first should be steadily cut down by increasing conventional strength. The smaller and more ambiguous the provocation, the more difficult and divisive will nuclear decision be within the alliance, and therefore the more important that defense not require it.

A greater Voice for all, decreasing need for agonizing nuclear initiatives, and new evidence of longer-run commitment to collective defense in and beyond the multilateral force, should combine to relieve anxieties and lessen status distinctions in the alliance. More explicit American provision for warhead release to a multilateral force would help counter any fears of a Soviet Europe-only nuclear blitz, and sharpen the focus for discussion about Control. To go farther requires, as a first step, that European member states approach a consensus about release procedures that would be less restrictive, and about delegation of authority to implement them. To this process the United States must contribute as a sympathetic informant, rather than as a proponent of one preferred solution, but it must insist upon minimal conditions for operational coordination

in the interest of all. The diplomatic task is delicate, but not insuperable; its outcome, uncertain and possibly disruptive, but clarifying.

The composition of a multilateral force is less important than its control and in any case cannot be discussed in meaningful detail here. As one well-publicized example, a choice between surface and submarine-based missiles turns acutely on comparative vulnerability. More attrition can be tolerated from a surface force because considerably more missiles can be bought and deployed for any given budget. But how much more? The proponent of submersibles will argue that their losses will be so much smaller, and the range of uncertainty about losses so much less, that the more expensive per-missile system will provide a better capability. These and associated issues supply open quantitative arguments that must be resolved elsewhere. For this political discussion only one aspect of missile choice need be noted. After Skybolt, tailoring any NATO launch complexes to a missile that is virtually certain to be procured in large quantities is a must, as is adaptability to improved successors. These advantages Polaris offers, because the American commitment to the submarine fleet that will carry them is so extensive that improved missiles as well as current tested ones will be tailored to fit.

It is a pity that nuclear information and guidance had not been systematically shared in NATO to a greater degree beginning years ago, or, more narrowly, that discussion about control of a multilateral force had not been carried forward more clearly. Then the felt collective need for such a force would or would not have been better established, and, if found desirable, its design could have been shaped accordingly. Among other things, the Nassau multinational precedent might have been avoided. But at least that precedent need not now be strengthened. Further proposals for a NATO nuclear force should provide for allied participation that confirms rather than upsets the indivisibility of nuclear defense. Specifically, there should be no withdrawal rights from operations, especially for the United States, and operational targeting and timing should be consistent with an alliance-wide capability for flexible nuclear response.

American control may be qualified, initially for added response assurance against Soviet massive nuclear attack, later perhaps against other threats if conflicting European desires are reconciled and American legislative assent obtained. The resultant control will be an imperfect substitute to all who naturally want only their own national finger on a trigger, but what besides NATO-wide federation offers that?